(b) if so, the rationale therefor; and

(c) whether such a situation would continue?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (c) Leave Travel Concession for judges is regulated by the rules framed under the acts namely, "The Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1958" and "The High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act 1954." As per provision under Rule 6-A of the Supreme Court Judges (Travelling Allowance) Rules, 1959, Judges of the Supreme Court are entitled to leave travel concession thrice a year and in terms of provision under Rule 7-A of the High Court Judges (Travelling Allowance) Rules, 1956 Judges of High Courts are entitled to leave travel concession twice a year. Both the High Court and the Supreme Court Judges were availing the Leave Travel Concession twice a year after 1986 but in 1990 the rules were changed after which Supreme Court Judges are entitled to three LTCs a year.

Bill to resurrect image of judiciary

1131. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is proposing to introduce a Bill to resurrect image of judiciary;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the legislation would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (c) The Government is considering to bring in a fresh legislation on the subject of judicial standards and accountability of Judges. The details of the proposed legislation are being worked out.

Setting up of additional High Court Benches

1132. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that there is a huge pendency of cases in High Courts;

(b) whether Government is thinking to establish High Court Benches in addition to the existing ones in view of the fact that the writs are on the increase;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) to (d) Setting up of a Bench of a High Court, is considered only if a complete proposal in terms of section 51(2) of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 is received from the State

Government concerned and it includes the consent of the Chief Justice of the High Court and the Governor of the State and that it satisfies the broad guidelines and criteria recommended by the Jaswant Singh Commission. No such proposal has been received by the Government as on date.

Relationship between judiciary and media

1133. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the observation made by the Supreme Court upon the press and media to restrain from reporting observations that tend to embarrass the judges; and

(b) if so, whether Government has taken or proposes to take any steps to harmonise the freedom of the press *vis-à-vis* judiciary and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Vacancies of judges in High Courts

1134. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the High Courts where the vacancies of judges exceed 25 per cent of the sanctioned strength of judges indicating the sanctioned and actual strength of judges as on 1 November, 2009;

(b) the specific reasons for delay in filling up of the vacancies; and

(c) whether in view of delay in the filling up of vacancies Government proposes to re-look into the procedure for selection of judges, so as to enable Government to fill up the vacancies as and when they arise without undue delay, if so, by when the new procedure is likely to be in place and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) A statement showing the sanctioned and working strength of the High Courts where the vacancies of Judges exceed 25 per cent of the approved strength of Judges as on 1st November, 2009, is enclosed (*See* below).

(b) The process for appointment of Judges of the High Courts is to be initiated by the Chief Justices of the concerned High Courts. The Government has not received sufficient proposals to fill up the vacant posts. The Government is periodically reminding the Chief Justices of the High Courts to initiate proposals in time for filling up the existing vacancies as well as the vacancies anticipated in the next six months.

(c) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Government.